
A Passing Fantasy Issue 147

NFLBP Player Newsletter 2005 Week Twelve

ed Robert Crowther

Thanks to Darren, Apple and Martyn for their contributions this time. Hope you all have a Merry Xmas and an excellent New Year. The address for contributions is:

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<http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/gameplan>

WEEK ELEVEN REVIEW

Darren Birtchnell

New England stretched the winning streak to double figures with a solid win in Cleveland. The Browns fell behind early and only 2 late TD's gave the scoreline a degree of respectability. Just going by the stats, the Jets-Ravens game looks to have been a strange one. New York seem to have had the edge in a lot of areas, but 6 sacks and 5 turnovers, including 4 fumbles, gave Baltimore enough opportunities to score without having to move too far. The Jets now face a tough battle to reach the playoffs while Baltimore continue to have the inside track on a wildcard. Miami just destroyed the hot-and-cold Seahawks, racking up nearly 500 yds on offense and holding Seattle to just 166. The Dolphins are coming up on the rails in the wildcard hunt and, as I well know, are a match for anyone on their day. Denver surprised most of the pundits by beating Buffalo. The Broncos performed better in most departments and if not for 3 lost fumbles it could have been a rout. A game that surprisingly turned into a rout was the Bengals' win in Oakland. The game was won and lost in the 2nd quarter - Oakland committed turnovers on 3 consecutive offensive plays and Cincy scored TD's off all of them, including a fumble returned for 6. The Bengals defense is looking very good again... KC ended their drought by beating up on Tennessee. They gave up a bit of yardage through the air, but

they picked off 4 passes and their running game was able to control the clock. They'll need to show a bit more consistency in the big games if they are to make the playoffs though. The Titans have now lost 29 straight and they have probably their last chance to end the streak in Dallas this week. I doubt if that one will make it to prime-time viewing though!

The Lions surprised almost everyone by beating the in-form Redskins. The 'Skins just couldn't get their offense going while Detroit did enough passing and running the ball to emerge victorious. Chicago's tailspin continued as they dropped their 7th straight game. They played Philly closer than expected, but after they fell behind they couldn't quite claw their way back into it. Carolina are another team on a long streak, although luckily for them they have recorded 9 consecutive wins. Their secondary had a good game, holding New York to 41% completions and grabbing 3 picks into the bargain. However, they have some tough games to end the season, so this will show what they're really made of. Dallas warmed up for this week's wooden spoon contest by losing again, this time at the hands of New Orleans. The Cowboys actually scored more times than the Saints, only problem was that all 5 were FG's while the Saints found the endzone 3 times. The Buccs and Rams played to a tie, in what looks like another strange statistical game. The Rams got themselves an early lead but Tampa came back to tie it in the 3rd quarter. The rest of the game finished scoreless and I think the Rams will be happier with the result than the Buccs. And finally, Green Bay kept up their push for a playoff spot by easily winning in San Francisco. The Niners only completed 37% of their passes and gave up 7 sacks, while the Pack might be disappointed not to have made more of their scoring opportunities. Still, a win's a win and if you keep doing that you'll be there or thereabouts at season's end.

PERFORMANCES OF THE WEEK

Offensive performance of the week goes to

Miami who, after a slow start, simply blew away their opponents. Defensive performance of the week goes to Cincinnati who held the second highest scoring offense in the league without a single TD opportunity. Special teams performance of the week goes to the Dallas Cowboys' kicker, who provided all of their points this week.

PREDICTIONS COMPETITION

Darren Birtchnell

Some better scores this week, boosted by 3 spot-on predictions by Dave, Peter and myself. The leaderboard hasn't changed, although it's now even tighter for 3rd place. However, there's probably still time for someone to make a late run...

Here are last week's scores:

Dave Pinder 40
Darren Birtchnell 36
Apple 31
Peter Kneil 31
Rob Crowther 27

And so the leaderboard now looks like this:

Chris Stones	35.8	(6)
Dave Pinder	32.6	(5)
Apple	30.8	(4)
Martyn Williams	30.1	(7)
Darren Birtchnell	30.0	(11)
Peter Kneil	28.5	(11)
Rob Crowther	26.6	(9)

BUCS BULLSHIT

Apple

Well what a strange game with the mighty Rams! 4 turnovers to 2 just about stopped us winning the game. Nearly all the points were scored off turnovers too but going for a 4th & 1 at the Rams 5 yard line and failing probably cost us the match. In OT nothing much happened apart from that last ditch bomb by the Rams that finished 5 yards short as extra time expired. I felt for Martyn being so close but then I starting grinning inanely and thought ahh never mind eh Williams bloke hehehe.

Team is pretty much where we want it at present, we have trained in the weak areas and the overall look of the team is decent, no

excuses from now on as we seem a lock for the title, only Goz has a chance of upstaging us but his team are not where they want to be right now.

The Rams seem to have some competition now, new players come in and whupp em (well done Briggsy!) Chris looks strong in the West and will probably win the Division. Hopefully we can secure homefield advantage but if we can't I guess we will deliberately lose to Chris to stop Martyn winning another SB...as if we would do that Bloke? :)

Tampa should do ok in the playoffs as I have master tactician Troy at the helm on defence, mighty fine job he's doing too. We are going to be tough to beat that's for sure I guess it will all hinge on the turnovers.

I would expect to beat the Rams in the playoffs as I took a whole minute to do my O plan in the tie, so must take a smidgen longer to put 40 past them, probably 2 minutes should suffice? Add to that Mr bloke is pants at game-plan anyway so it should be a walkover if he gets that far in the playoffs.

Wonder if bloke will actually respond to this as it would be great to hear from him :)

BLEATINGS FROM ST LOUIS

Martyn Williams

A strange four weeks for my Rams - not used to going 1-2-1, and all of a sudden I find myself 1 1/2 games back in the NFC West to young Stoney's Panthers. Aaargh, brings back memories of the bad old days when John Coleman led Carolina to Super Bowl success (remember that Darren?!);o) The game against the Buccaneers was a bit weird, at the end I was dead chuffed to have not lost against APP and Troy, two of the best coaches in the business, but once I took a look at the standings and also realised next up we were travelling to Foxboro, I was a little less happy. In my opinion we've got it all to do now if we are to retain our division title, Stoney would have to be a right mug not to finish the job from here, NFC HFA beckons (no pressure mind Chris!). Oh, and a quick note to Dazza Birtchers - yes, our run D may be a bit soft at times, but that hasn't stopped us contesting the last 4 super bowls and winning the last 3 - remind me the last time Cincinnati went to the big dance?!

:oP I'm still the Daddy of BP!

WEEK TWELVE PREVIEW

Rams at Patriots – The champs have been stuttering of late, New England at home too good for them? PATRIOTS BY 3

Jets at 49ers – San Francisco's season has gone down the tubes in recent weeks, New York are still battling for a wildcard and should have enough motivation to win on the road. JETS BY 7

Panthers at Dolphins – Miami have been fairly competitive this year, but Carolina are a class above them. PANTHERS BY 10

Bills at Saints – Coach Briggs has produced a very impressive turnaround in New Orleans, Buffalo will be no match for this revitalised franchise. SAINTS BY 3

Redskins at Browns – Cleveland are still trying to overcome their very poor start, they have the offense to beat anybody but the defense to lose to anybody. If they get any sort of performance out of their defense they'll be too good for Washington at home. BROWNS BY 7

Ravens at Eagles – Philly are riding the crest of a four game winning streak which has seen them back to the top of the NFC East. Baltimore have been a little less consistent but probably have the firepower to end Philly's streak. RAVENS BY 7

Giants at Bengals – Something of a mismatch in this one, can't see Cincy slipping up here after last week's defensive performance. BENGALS BY 21

Titans at Cowboys – Even if Tennessee win they'd still be leading the race for top draft pick, Dallas look considerably better despite only having one more win. COWBOYS BY 17

Lions at Raiders – Oakland seek to bounce back against a Detroit team which has pulled off a few surprises recently.

Chiefs at Bears – KC should pick up an easy

win to maintain their position in the playoff race. CHIEFS BY 17

Bucs at Seahawks – I think Seattle are better than their record, but they're a long way off being as good as Tampa. BUCS BY 28

Broncos at Packers – Denver don't stand a chance, Green Bay to finally establish themselves in a playoff position. PACKERS BY 21

PREDICTIONS

Peter Kneil: Patriots by 10, Jets by 7, Panthers by 14, Saints by 10, Browns by 3, Ravens by 7, Bengals by 24, Cowboys by 17, Raiders by 21, Chiefs by 10, Bucs by 21, Packers by 17

Darren Birtchnell: Patriots by 3, Jets by 10, Panthers by 7, Saints by 8, Browns by 6, Ravens by 7, Bengals by 17, Cowboys by 6, Raiders by 21, Chiefs by 13, Bucs by 20, Packers by 13

Apple: Rams by 7, 49ers by 7, Panthers by 14, Saints by 12, Redskins 7, Ravens 7, Bengals 21, Dallas 3, Raiders 10, Chiefs 7, Bucs 27, Packers 17

Martyn Williams: Patriots by 7, Jets by 8, Panthers by 10, Saints by 10, Browns by 3, Ravens by 7, Bengals by 21, Cowboys by 1, Raiders by 17, Chiefs by 10, Bucs by 17, Packers by 14

Chris Stones: Rams by 1, Jets by 7, Panthers by 3, Saints by 7, Browns by 6, Ravens by 6, Bengals by 20, Cowboys by 10, Raiders by 14, Chiefs by 13, Bucs by 17, Packers by 14